



Committed to the future of rural communities.

NEWS RELEASE

HELPING TO MAKE RURAL MISSOURI A BETTER PLACE TO LIVE

USDA Rural Development assisted rural Missouri with over \$450 million in financial assistance during Fiscal Year 2004. The assistance was through a variety of loan and grant programs to thousands of individuals, families, businesses and communities. These funds were used to provide quality housing, good jobs, clean drinking water plus reliable modern essential community facilities and services.

Gil Gonzales, Acting Under Secretary for Rural Development, recently congratulated Gregory C. Branum, State Director for USDA Rural Development in Missouri, for these accomplishments which were in support of President George Bush's initiatives for rural America and USDA Rural Development's overall vision statement --- ***Committed to the future of rural communities!***

"USDA Rural Development is extremely pleased to help rural Missouri with this financial assistance," said Branum. "I sincerely appreciate the hard work of the Missouri Rural Development staff, the applicants that completed the necessary paperwork, our partners, the strong support that we received from the Missouri Congressional delegation, and President Bush's leadership.

"Through the hardworking folks in Missouri's rural communities, local development groups and our friends at USDA these dollars have made many critical projects a reality. I look forward to continuing our work to revitalize rural America one community at a time," said Senator Kit Bond.

"Investing in rural Missouri will create jobs and stimulate the economy," said U.S. Senator Jim Talent, a member of the Senate Agriculture Committee. "Working together we are passing a pro-jobs, pro-growth agenda for Missouri that includes providing rural communities with the financial resources they need to keep our economy strong and vibrant."

The USDA mission goal was to provide or partner with others in providing the financial and technical resources to assist private citizens, small businesses, nonprofit organizations, communities, cities and counties in assuring that each rural community has what it takes to improve the quality of life and be successful in the 21st century. Some of the highlights of these accomplishments are as follows:

In the Rural Development Single Family Housing Programs a grand total of almost \$146 million of financial service was provided in Missouri. Of this amount, \$106.2 million of loan guarantees were provided through partnerships with private sector lenders. The guaranteed housing program assisted 1,356 individuals or families. Another \$39.2 million was provided to 1,037 deserving individuals or families with the 502 and 504 direct housing program.

There were three grants to help families with \$168,753 of repairs through a Housing Preservation Grant program. Three Self-Help Technical Assistance grants for \$273,000 were issued to assist twenty families with housing assistance. Through countless hours of hard work, they combined a Rural Development housing loan with their own "sweat equity" to build a home and realize the American Dream of homeownership.

In the Rural Development Multi-family Housing Programs, affordable rental units benefited rural residents in 8 communities where \$2,481,611 was loaned for apartment complexes. Additionally, USDA partnered with Missouri Housing Development Commission with 11 projects to help renovate 328 rental units with \$3.5 million in additional funds. It is estimated that over 4,500 jobs were saved or created to provide rental housing in rural Missouri. Another \$15,963,727 of rental assistance was provided to 8,800 very low income families living in approximately 20,000 apartments in 900 rental projects financed by Rural Development in Missouri.

Through the Community Facilities program over \$23,001,273 in funds were provided to 75 communities for projects including 6 fire and rescue centers, 35 first responders and early warning systems, 3 daycare centers, 8 health care facilities, a museum, and a justice county center.

In the Rural Development Business-Cooperative Service (RBS) program a grand total of \$40.1 million was delivered to rural Missouri. Of this amount, over \$37.6 million were loaned or guaranteed with our commercial lender partners to assist 24 businesses across the state. Funds were used to finance retail businesses (grocery store, restaurant, motel, propane distribution, shopping center, heating equipment manufacturing, food processing plant, building for an eye clinic, rehab of a building to a farmer owned cooperative to make pet products, and a broadband wireless communication system for the highway transportation industry. As a result of these loans there were 1881 jobs created or saved in Missouri rural areas.

Several cities, communities, counties and organizations were recipients of almost \$2.5 Million through other Rural Development loan and grant programs. These included almost \$1 Million in 19 Rural Business Enterprise Grants, one Rural Business Opportunity Grant for \$50,000, one Renewable Energy Grant for \$7,500, one Rural Cooperative Development Grant for \$298,065 and one Rural Economic Development loan for \$100,000. Missouri was very fortunate to receive 7 Value Added Producer Grants totaling just over \$1 million to fund a variety of projects across the state. All of these programs allowed rural Missourians to benefit with assistance in planning through feasibility studies, training, conducting surveys, and essential infrastructure in support of economic and community development activities in rural areas.

In the Rural Development Rural Utilities Services (RUS) program, a grand total of \$210.3 million of assistance was provided to communities, including water and waste, electrical, and telephone distribution. In the water and waste area, \$32.7 Million was made available through 25 loans and 30 grants which assisted over 9,600 families with adequate drinking water and new or improved waste disposal systems. The USDA funds were leveraged with \$8.5 million of other federal, state, and local funds to accomplish these results.

Four communities benefited with the Emergency Community Water Assistance Grants (ECWAG) totaling \$600,000 for drought related projects. Another 6 cities or communities benefited with \$54,820 in Predevelopment Planning Grants (PPG). Most of this money will be used for preliminary Engineering and Environmental Reports.

In the Telephone program area, a total of \$41.2 million assisted Missouri areas including: a Broadband Loan for \$4.3 million, a Public TV transmission loan for \$237,909, four Distance Learning and Telemedicine grants for \$389,809, and four infrastructure loans for \$36.6 million. Loans are available through the telephone program to connect subscribers, provide improvements in the transmission and switching facilities, provide fiber optic cables, and expand telecommunication systems to provide better service to rural Missouri residents.

In the Electrical program area a total of \$136.4 million was provided including: 13 distribution loans for \$92.3 million and two generation and transmission projects for \$44 million assisting several communities and rural residents. Some of the funds were utilized to assist with generation and transmission of electricity and some to distribute electricity to end users/customers. It is estimated over 50,000 rural residential consumers benefited from the electrical program.

Branum extended special thanks to Missouri's federal elected officials for making these federal monies available to rural Missourians.

Branum added, "I want to extend my sincere appreciation to the many partners that assisted the Missouri USDA Rural Development staff with these accomplishments. With continued cooperation, we look forward to helping more individuals, families, businesses and communities with their needs in the year ahead."

USDA Rural Development's mission is to deliver programs in a way that will support increasing economic opportunity and improve the quality of life of rural residents. Rural Development is Rural America's Venture Capitalist providing equity, liquidity, and technical assistance to finance and foster growth in homeownership, business development, plus critical community and technology infrastructure. Further information on these rural programs is available at a local USDA Rural Development office or visiting USDA's web site at <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/mo/>.

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